

## Church News

Troy, Ohio

Sunday, July 10, I visited the Troy Brethren church. Although they have no pastor the Sabbath school and Sabbath morning and evening services are continued. The attendance is not large. The faithful few are always on duty, patiently working and waiting until the Master comes.

A church without a pastor and a home without a mother have many disadvantages.

These dear members are daily expecting good news from the Home Mission Board or the state evangelist. When shall their fondest hope be realized?

S. KIEHL.

Dayton, O.

## Echoes From the Conflict

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

For nineteen hundred years that war has been waged. No truce has been displayed. Defeats have been endured. Success and victories have inspired hope and courage. Still our great commander shouts "Forward." The enemy has been besieged in every stronghold. Brethren amid the present din of carnal war and the noise of battle from afar let us not be carried from our posts of duty nor abate in our efforts for Christ. Ours is the greater battle. The end is drawing near.

For some time past we have been strengthening our defences and encouraging the soldiers by personal visits. We have had no recruits recently. Those in the ranks are enduring hardening as good soldiers for Jesus. All who came to the church last winter are standing nobly to the work. There is evidence of progress in both my congregations. Greater possibly in one than the other.

Sometimes we are asked the question, How do we know when we are growing spiritually? How do you know when the church is growing?

Physical health is manifested by vigorous appetite and constant activity. With good health there is increase of body. It may not be in length or width or even in weight, but in strength and skill for life's duties. So spiritually; when a member of the church has a desire (appetite) to do God's will a desire for God's service, enjoys reading his Bible, delights in the service of the sanctuary, relishes straight gospel sermons there is every evidence of good spiritual health. Growth and life will be manifested by activity in church work and in self-control. Such persons will recognize within themselves greater ability to control evil desires and passions. They will find it more difficult to do evil and easier to do right. Such persons are ready, and in most cases willing, to take hold of the work in any way which may present itself as an opportunity to serve Christ.

such large returns to various benevolent enterprises. But we must admit that there is no Scripture warrant for a method so spasmodic and sentimental. The danger is, that after the "lenten" season is over, indulgence may run riot, as tho there were some new right acquired to pleasure by the self-imposed restraints.

The various individual schemes for promoting true giving we can only mention, since they have so limited a range of experiment. We know some two who devote to the Lord's purposes, pound for pound, or dollar for dollar, an equal amount to that expended for self. Equitable indeed it seems, to make God the partner who shares alike with ourselves in all the outgo of property. But is not this implying, at least, that the half we spend on ourselves is not His, and that the moiety we hand over to Him equalizes all claims? A very few Christians have *limited* their accumulations or expenditures to what they deem a reasonable sum, and put the whole remainder at the Lord's disposal—a high example of giving, indeed, in contrast with the low level of most saints. But of these and all other methods, more or less current, the question still arises, and will not down at our bidding: Is this God's standard of giving? We feel forced to look at this grave matter solely in the searching light of the will and words of God. We have come to accept a method—and still worse a *notion* of giving, which begins in an issue with the universal Owner. We count what we have *our own*, not His. We think of ourselves as owners, proprietors, not stewards, and trustees. We satisfy ourselves with setting aside the Lord's portion, and consider ourselves entitled to determine what that portion is, and treat the rest as our own, to do as we will with it. Hence comes that avaricious hoarding and self-indulgent spending, which are supposed to be legitimate; and that tardy atonement found in the "munificent bequests," of which Shaftesbury was wont to speak with such contempt, as tho there could be any real munificence in giving away what one can no longer use, or even keep. Rightly viewed, it is questionable whether there be even such things as "munificent donations," since a "debtor," a "trustee," a "steward"—which are God's own terms for His human creatures—can not make a *donation*, he can only discharge a debt, fulfil a trust, execute a commission.

Continued next week.

## Where Property Is Not Safe

The representative of a great English firm was once heard to remark that he never took a mortgage nor purchased a lot in a town in which there was no Christian church.

When asked whether that was due to his religious principles or to his business experience, he promptly replied, "To the latter."

"I am not," he added, "a religious man or connected with any church; but I have learned by experience not to invest a customer's money at home or abroad in a place where neither life nor property is safe. Life and property are not safe in my judgment, in those places where churches do not exist.—*Church at Home and Abroad.*"

Those who are on the spiritual decline will manifest the opposite symptoms from those described. What is true of the individual is true of the church composed of individuals.

## UNION MEETINGS

Since our last union meeting at home I am more enthusiastic in their advocacy than ever before. The whole program was a feast for the spiritual man. All who sacrificed to to attend went away satisfied that they had been richly paid for all the cost. The hospitality of the brethren at home is of that sort which is careful to entertain strangers. Doubtless they entertained angels unawares not in the persons entertained but in the blessings invoked by them.

The law of Christ is not something for nothing but give and ye shall receive. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

This last paragraph was written for the encouragement of those who have so willingly taken upon themselves the burden of caring for our union meetings, conferences, etc. And for the meditation of those who stay at home. If we wait, brethren, till we can attend U. M's., conferences, S. S. and C. E. conventions without sacrifices, inconveniences, or self-denials we shall never attend them at all; and what is more, they would be very insipid and unsavory affairs if we should ever be able to attend under such desirable conditions. The man who has honestly labored for a meal enjoys it most. He enjoys best a spiritual feast who has given up most of self to secure it. If we wait till we find it so very convenient to attend such meetings we shall find very little to enjoy.

## A VISIT AMONG STRANGERS

The last month has given me an opportunity to visit several churches in this district to whom I have been a stranger. Maple Grove near Eaton, Delaware Co., and Bethel seven miles east from Burne, Adams Co. Both are country churches and almost wholly isolated from other churches of this district. The latter is possibly the most isolated church in the state.

Maple Grove is under the pastoral care of elder W. W. Summers and has been for fourteen years. By the way, Brother Kimmel, how does that suit your theory? I heartily endorse what Brother K. has written. He has said all and better than I could have said it tho I have long wished for the opportunity to say my piece in public. May his efforts result in fruit, not theory, but something practical among the Brethren churches.

Though isolated Maple Grove is in no way behind the more closely allied churches in sympathy and co-operation in the general work of the church.

Bethel is under the pastoral care of elder J. H. Swihart who has taken upon himself to retire from active service. He contemplates going west in Oct., '98. Doubtless he expects to grow up with the country. Brother H. has had charge of Bethel at several different terms, the last term for two years. We were here but one evening but that was